

More than 30 infant deaths since 2001; millions of recalls in recent years

WASHINGTON, DC (December 15, 2010) – Today U.S. Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Chairman Inez Tenenbaum, Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), and Rep. Joseph Crowley (D-NY), and a parent whose child died from a faulty crib announced that the Consumer Product Safety Commission has approved new federal rules to prohibit traditional drop-side cribs.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission announced new federal crib safety standards, which are set to take effect in June, and would stop the sale, re-sale, manufacture, and distribution of drop-side cribs. The rules would also prohibit drop-side cribs at motels, hotels and childcare facilities. Drop-side cribs have resulted in the deaths of at least 32 infants since 2001. CPSC's new federal standards will also make mattress supports stronger, crib hardware sturdier and compliance testing more rigorous. This is the first time in nearly 30 years that federal crib standards have been updated.

Today's new crib safety rules address a requirement, authored by Rep. Jan Schakowsky, in the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) of 2008 that calls for all major juvenile products, including cribs, to have the strongest possible mandatory safety standards.

Schakowsky's work was inspired by Linda Ginzel, the mother of Danny Keysar, a 16-month-old Chicago boy who was strangled when his playpen collapsed at his daycare in 1998. Working with Ginzel, other parents, and child product safety advocates like Kids in Danger and the Consumer Federation of America, Schakowsky successfully incorporated the child product safety provision into the larger Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, a sweeping child product safety law. A portion of the legislation is named after Danny Keysar. In May, Sen. Gillibrand and Rep. Crowley launched an effort in Congress to ban all drop-side cribs.

Rep. Jan Schakowsky: "Today we celebrate an enormous step forward in crib safety that will ensure that both we – and our children – can sleep soundly and safely at night. I want to thank Chairwoman Tenenbaum for her strong leadership on this issue. The standards set today are the strongest in the world, and will finally end the preventable drop-side crib tragedies that have injured or killed infants and children.

"Today has been a long time coming. I first introduced legislation in 2001 that led to today's rules, requiring safety standards for cribs as well as products like high chairs, bath seats, and playpens. Children's products must be 100 percent safe; I will continue the fight to ensure this necessary standard for years to come.

“I also want to thank all the parents who have turned a personal tragedy into powerful advocacy, and acknowledge the tireless work that Illinois’ Attorney General Lisa Madigan has done to put an end to dangerous drop-side cribs.”

Chairman Tenenbaum: “I made a promise to parents and Congress at the beginning of the year that there would be new and improved federal crib standards this year and that promise was fulfilled today. After nearly 30 years, these new crib safety rules will usher in a new generation of safer cribs. ... Let me express my sincere thanks to Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky for being a champion of child safety and the sponsor of the section of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act that called for these new crib safety standards... I want to recognize [Sen. Gillibrand and Rep. Crowley] for standing up for the safety of children by introducing crib safety legislation this year.”

Drop-side cribs, those with at least one side that moves up and down, have proven fatal to a number of children. Michele Witte from Long Island, who lost her child due to a drop-side crib, joined the leaders to announce the new ban. More than a decade ago, the Witte family’s 10 month-old son Tyler was strangled between the side rail and headboard of a drop-side crib. Since 2001, at least 32 infants have died from drop-side cribs. According to the CPSC, 14 additional infant deaths could be linked to drop-side cribs. Cribs involved in these incidents had plastic drop-side hardware that were broken, deformed, or loose, often times breaking apart and

causing children to slip through the gap and risk suffocation or strangulation.

The most recent announcement of Ethan Allen, Angel Line and Victory Land Heritage Collection 3-in-1 crib recalls this October were part of millions of drop-side cribs recalls over the past three years. Thirteen deaths have been linked to Simplicity cribs, which were recalled in September. Close to every major brand of cribs, including Graco, Generation 2 Worldwide, Dorel, Caramia, LaJobi, Stork Craft, Simplicity, and Delta Enterprise have recalled drop-side cribs in the last 18 months. Toys “R” Us, one of the nation’s largest children’s stores, has stopped selling these potentially deadly cribs.

Other recalls in 2010 of drop-side cribs include:

June: More than 2 million recalled by Delta, Evenflo, Jardine, Child Craft, LaJobi, Million Dollar Baby, Baby Mod, Da Vinci, Simmons

May: 170,000 recalled by C&T International, Sorelle and Golden Baby

April: More than 200,000 Graco®-branded drop-side cribs recalled by LaJobi

March: 600,000 recalled by Dorel Asia after a six-month-old died from strangulation.

February: More than 500,000 recalled by Generation 2 Worldwide and “ChildESIGNS” after three infants died from suffocation over the past several years.

January: 1,000 recalled by Caramia Furniture after 18 cases of vertical slats detached from rails.

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